

**TO:** Tourism Advisory Committee

**FROM:** David Kleitsch, Economic Development Director

**DATE:** October 4, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Director's Report

**Greetings**

I hope this finds you doing well. With summer behind us we can now brace for a La Nina winter. There may not be much difference between the two. This Director's Report provides an update of recent tourism activities.

**October TAC Meeting Cancelled**

The TAC meeting on October 13, 2011, will be cancelled due to a scheduling conflict with the Seattle meeting of the Washington Tourism Alliance. It is important for us to attend the WTA meeting as they discuss the future of tourism in Washington. We will provide an update of matters discussed by WTA.

**Committee Membership**

Brenda Klein, General Manager Alderwood has applied to serve on the Tourism Advisory Committee as the Retail Representative, Position 7. Brenda has been interviewed by the Mayor and City Council. The City Council is scheduled to confirm her appointment on October 10.

The Restaurant Representative, Position 6, remains unfilled. We continue to reach out to potential candidates and have two that have expressed interest. Thank you to those on the committee who have helped identify potential candidates.

**Snohomish County Strategic Tourism Plan**

On April 24, 2011, the Snohomish County Council adopted the countywide Strategic Tourism Plan Strategies. The strategies provide a framework for specific tourism activities to be funded by the County.

The funding source identified by the County to implement the Strategic Tourism Plan is the County's Lodging Tax Large Fund. Revenue for the large fund is from a 2% countywide sales tax collected on short-term lodging. In the past the large fund has been used to fund capital expenditures that support tourism.

The use of the Large Fund for program activities required that the Large Fund Program Guidelines be amended. The County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee has recommended to the County Council that the Large Fund Program Guidelines be

amended so that tourism program activities in accordance with the Strategic Tourism Plan are eligible for funding. The recommendation stipulates that projects assisted by the large fund will be generally compliant with the policy as approved by the County Council in the 2010 Strategic Tourism Plan. The LTAC further recommended that the accepted use of Large Fund revenues include non-capital projects.

County Council adopted the LTAC recommendations on September 19, 2011. Specific funding allocations for tourism activities will require review and recommendation by the LTAC and action by the County Council.

### **Tourism Promotion Area Update**

The Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) Board has completed the by-laws and is in the process of finalizing the application for requesting funding from the County TPA. The Board hopes to start awarding funds in early 2012.

### **STR Report**

Lodging in Snohomish County continues to improve. Metrics for August 2011 YTD are as follows: Occupancy is 67.2 up 4.4% compared 2010; RevPAR is \$57.54, up 9.7%, and ADR is \$85.61, up 5.1%. By comparison, King County metrics are as follows: occupancy is 71.5% up 5.1%, ADR is \$120.45, up 4.3%, and RevPAR is \$86.14, up 9.6%. Overall, Snohomish County ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in YTD occupancy, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in RevPar.

### **Washington Tourism Alliance**

The Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA) Executive Director and Charter Board of Directors have been appointed. Effective August 1, 2011, Suzanne Fletcher, a 30-year travel and tourism industry veteran is the WTA Executive Director.

The Board, comprised of 20 tourism industry stakeholders, includes representatives from key tourism industry segments: lodging; destination marketing; attractions; restaurants and transportation:

David Bauemeister, Northwest Agriculture Business Center  
Tammy Blount, Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitor Bureau  
John Bookwalter, Bookwalter Winery  
Darrell Bryan, Clipper Vacations  
Donna Cappa, Tulalip Resort Casino  
John Cedergreen, Ancient Lakes Brewing Company  
Kevin Clark, Argosy Cruises  
John Cooper, Yakima Valley Visitors & Convention Bureau  
Frank Finneran, Frank K. Finneran & Co.  
Jane Kilburn, Port of Seattle  
Cheryl Kilday, Spokane Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Dan Moore, EverGreen Escapes  
Andy Olsen, Columbia Hospitality  
Christina Pivarnik, City of Port Townsend/CP Communications

George Schweitzer, Red Lion Hotels  
Diane Schostak, Olympic Peninsula Visitors Bureau  
Karen Stebbins, Ski Washington/Northwest Winter Sports Foundation  
Monique Trudnowski, Adriatic Grill  
Brett Wilkerson, North Pacific Management  
Duane Wollmuth, Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance

The Board has appointed chairs for the five major committees: Long Term Funding & Advocacy, Membership, Marketing & Communications, Summit & Events, and Website. Committees are preparing to report back to the Board at the October meeting with their goals and objectives. Tourism Manager Monroe is serving on the Marketing and Communications Committee.

For more information on the Washington Tourism alliance, please visit their web site at [www.watourismalliance.com](http://www.watourismalliance.com)

#### **Convention Center Staffing**

Kelvin Moore, General Manager of the Lynnwood Convention Center has accepted a position within SMG to manage a property in Jackson, Mississippi. His last day at the Lynnwood Convention Center was September 21, 2011. Kelvin has helped build a strong team at the Convention Center and he will be missed. SMG is in the process of hiring a new General Manager for the Lynnwood Convention Center.

#### **Anthony's Seafood Grill**

On October 7, 2011, Anthony's Seafood Grill will have an opening reception and ribbon cutting at their new restaurant location in Alderwood at the Terraces. This is a wonderful addition to Alderwood and an asset for tourism marketing.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting date is November 10, 2011.